

HEAVITREE
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health,

1908.

PRINTED BY
W. J. A. HORTON & SON, 185, BOWELL STREET,

1909



TO THE
CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE

Urban District Council of Heavitree.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Report on the Health and General Sanitary condition of your District for the year ending December 31st, 1908.

Compared with that of previous years the public health has, on the whole, been good, the birth-rate was higher while the death-rate was lower, and the rate of Infant Mortality much lower, than the average for the past ten years and also much lower than that for the whole of England and Wales.

The number of notifications of Infectious Diseases was greater than in 1907, but many of the cases were extremely mild, and with regard to the other Diseases the most unsatisfactory feature was the prevalence of Whooping Cough over the whole District from February to June. The year was unusually dry, the total rainfall having been only 23·4 inches, but the average temperature was not high owing to East winds. There was a heavy fall of snow in the last week of December.

AREA AND POPULATION.

The area of the District is 3500 acres. Apart from the so-called natural increase, or excess of births over deaths, which was 133, there has been very little increase in the population during the year. For the previous year I estimated it at 10,300 excluding the patients in the two Asylums. This year it was about 10,500, and on this the rates in columns 4 and 12 of Table I (supplied by the Local Government Board,) were calculated, but the total population including the Public Institutions was 10,956.

VITAL STATISTICS.—*Births.*

During the year the number of births registered was 264 (145 boys and 119 girls) an increase of 21 over the previous year and equal to a rate of 25·14 per 1000 of the population (as against 23·53 in 1907.) The highest monthly return was 38 in June and the lowest 10 in February

The per-centage of illegitimate to legitimate births was 1·5.

Table showing the number of births and birth-rate for each of the years 1898 to 1908.

Year	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
No. of Births	142.	155.	134.	130.	154.	220.	193.	209	255.	243.	264.
Birth-rate	19·8.	21·3.	18·1.	17·1.	21·3.	29·2.	24·5.	24·5.	25·5.	23·5.	25·1.

The Notification of Births' Act has not yet been adopted by the Council.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered in the District was 155, equal to a rate of 14·14 per 1000. From this number the deaths of 40 persons who did not belong to the District, and who died in Public Institutions, must be deducted and the following added - 8 that occurred in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, 5 in the Devon County Asylum, and 3 in the St. Thomas Union Workhouse. Making these corrections there remain 131 (68 males and 63 females,) giving a death-rate of 12·47 per 1000, while the average rate for the previous

ten years was 13.32. The death-rate for England and Wales in 1908 was 14.7. Of those belonging to the District 46 were over 65 years of age.

The Polsloe Ward had 38 deaths, the Wonford Ward 25, the Priory 18, Central 18, and Rural Ward 15. The home address of 17 residents was not stated. The lowest monthly return was 4 in September and the highest 16 in March.

Table showing the number of deaths of Residents and the death-rate for the years 1898 to 1908.

Year	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
No. of Deaths	95.	108.	74.	83.	104.	102.	111.	133.	112.	127.
Death-rate	13.27.	16.1.	10.8.	11.6	14.3	13.5.	14.14.	15.64	11.20.	12.33.

Average rate for ten years 13.32.

INFANT MORTALITY.

The number of deaths of Infants under one year of age was 21, which is equivalent to a rate of 79.5 per 1000 births registered. This rate has been lower on only two occasions during the past 12 years as the following table shows.

Year	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
No. of Deaths	22.	21.	14.	12.	9.	19	12.	25.	20.	32.	23.	21.
Rate per 1000 Births registered	150.	132.	90.	89.	69.	123.	54.	129.	95.	129.	94.	79.

Average rate for the 12 years 102. The rate for England and Wales in 1901 was 121.

The causes of death were Wasting Diseases (including Premature birth) 7, Whooping Cough 5, Diarrhœal Diseases 3, Bronchitis and Pneumonia 2, and other causes 4.

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.

There were 8 deaths registered from the principal Zymotic Diseases, as against 12 in 1907, and the rate was 0.73 per 1000; the rate for England and Wales in the same period was 1.29.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT DEATH.

This table also shows the total number of deaths at each age period, and the corresponding per-centage of total deaths belonging to the District.

CAUSES.	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Whooping Cough	6	5	1	...	.	...	...
Diphtheria	2	.	1	1	...	...	...
Influenza	3	...	1	...	...	1	1
Diarrhœa	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Enteritis	10	2	1	...	1	...	6
Phthisis	12	1	...	2	1	8	...
Other Tuberculous Diseases	3	...	...	...	2	1	...
Cancer	9	.	...	...	...	7	2
Bronchitis	7	1	...	...	...	...	6
Pneumonia	6	1	1	1	...	2	1
Alcoholism	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Venereal Diseases	2	2	.	...	...	...	...
Premature Birth	3	3	...	...	...	...	...
Heart Diseases	9	.	...	...	1	5	3
Accidents	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Suicide	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Cerebral Apoplexy	9	.	...	...	...	5	4
General Paralysis	2	...	...	...	...	2	...
Diabetes	1	.	...	...	...	...	1
Nephritis	8	...	...	...	...	4	4
Senile Decay	10	...	...	...	...	...	10
Other Causes	25	5	2	...	...	10	8
All causes	131	21	8	4	5	47	46
Per-centage of total deaths		16.0	6.1	3.05	3.81	35.87	35.09

In one instance the cause of death was not certified.

There were 5 Inquests held during the year.

The action of the Council in providing such a conveniently situated and up-to-date Mortuary has been much appreciated by the Medical Profession. Performing Post-mortem examinations in private houses is most objectionable for many reasons.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

The following particulars of deaths that occurred in the Asylums may be of interest.

(a)	<i>Cause of Death.</i>		<i>Number.</i>
	<i>Cause.</i>		
	Enteritis	... ..	4
	Phthisis	... ..	5
	Cancer	... ..	1
	Pneumonia	... ..	3
	Heart Diseases	... ..	14
	Epilepsy	... ..	1
	General Paralysis	... ..	5
	Senile Decay	... ..	1
	Other Causes	.. ...	6

(b)	<i>Distribution of Deaths.</i>		
	Exeter City Asylum	... ..	36
	Wonford House Asylum	... ..	4

(c)	<i>Ages at Death.</i>		
	15 to 25 years	... ..	4
	25 to 65 years	.. ...	23
	65 and upwards	... ..	13

Deaths from all forms of Brain Diseases amounted to only 15 per cent. of the total deaths.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Although the number of Notifications was much greater than in 1907 (41 against 23) there were very few severe cases. Two deaths occurred, giving a death-rate of 0·18 per 1000 of the population

There were no cases of Small Pox, Membranous Croup, Puerperal Fever, Typhus or Continued Fever notified during the year.

DIPHTHERIA.

Six cases of this Disease were notified and two proved fatal. This is the largest number of cases in one year since 1896, but only 4 houses were affected as 4 cases occurred in

two families. In one instance defective drains were taken to be the cause. The other cases occurred in comparatively new houses and no definite cause was discovered.

Bacteriological examination confirmed the diagnosis in three instances. Two of the cases were treated in Hospital.

ERYSIPELAS.

Three cases were notified, as compared with 2 in 1907, with no fatality.

SCARLATINA.

Twenty-seven cases were notified (as against 15 in 1907) with no death. Some of the cases were so mild that the diagnosis was rendered extremely doubtful. Ten cases occurred in the Central Ward, 9 in the Polsloe Ward, Priory Ward 5, Wonford Ward 3, but none from the Rural Ward. In two instances 3 cases occurred in one house, in another there were two, and those remaining were one in each house save that 2 occurred in the Topsham Military Barracks. 24 cases occurred in houses where proper isolation was impossible and were removed to Hospital. The average age of those attacked was 8 (against 17 in 1907.) The majority occurred in September and November. One case was undoubtedly contracted in Tedburn St. Mary, but where many cases are very mild it is highly probable that some have gone undetected even after careful examination, and therefore it is impossible to trace this disease to its source in every instance. As most of the notified cases had been attending one school, I inspected that school and examined all the children (about 150) who were likely to have come in contact with the patients, but could not discover anything suspicious. No death has been registered since 1903.

ENTERIC FEVER.

There were 5 notifications, against 3 in 1907. Three occurred in one house and the first of these was undoubtedly the source of infection for the others and also for a neighbour, who had been assisting as Nurse, but as to how or where the first case was contracted I could not discover. The remaining

case had nothing to do with the others, and here also the cause was undiscovered.

In another instance although "Enteric Fever" was written on the patient's chart, the case was not notified by the Medical Attendant, also the patient died and there was no mention of Fever on the death certificate. I mention this because it has been stated that the notified cases, who were relatives of the deceased, contracted the disease from this house. Supposing this case was Enteric Fever, this source of infection for the others is, in my opinion, very doubtful for the following reasons (1) The length of time between the case and the first of the others, over two months, whereas the usual period of incubation is from 7 to 21 days. (2) The first of the other cases had not been in this house at all, and the others very rarely called. (3) The premises had not been disinfected and no precautions were taken yet there has not been another case in that cottage (containing five other inmates) or in that road.

In two instances the diagnosis was confirmed by Widal's blood test.

One case was removed to the Sanatorium.

Table showing the number of cases notified and deaths in each of the past ten years.

Year	1899	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
No. of Cases	63	17	3	3	6	4	1	1	3	5
Deaths	4	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

No death has been registered since 1904.

OTHER DISEASES.

MEASLES.

The District was almost, if not entirely, free from this disease. This compares very favourably with the previous year when it was very prevalent for some months.

WHOOPIING COUGH.

This disease was prevalent from March to June over the whole District, and 6 deaths occurred.

DIARRHŒAL DISEASES.

Among children under one year of age there were only four deaths and, not counting a doubtful case, only one was due to Summer Diarrhœa. There were 10 from Enteritis and Gastritis, 6 of which were of persons over 65 years of age.

INFLUENZA.

Deaths assigned to this disease have decreased from 5 in 1907 to 3.

SKIN DISEASES.

An outbreak of Skin Diseases occurred among the School Children and arrangements were made by the Authority for free treatment for those who could not afford to pay.

During September and October 72 Children were treated, many only slightly affected by disease, a few severely. Fifty were suffering with Impetigo, 12 with Ringworm, 5 with Scabies, Eczema 3, and Favus 2. Those with Contagious Diseases were not allowed to attend School. Treatment was continued for a few weeks, and in that time 30 Cases were cured and many others improved.

PHTHISIS.

The number of deaths from this Disease was 12, and the rate 1.14 per 1000 of the population, which is lower than the average for the previous ten years (1.34.)

Table giving the number of deaths and death-rate in each year since 1897.

	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908
No. of Deaths	15	11	9	8	10	6	10	13	9	12	12
Death-rate	2.3	1.65	1.32	1.15	1.38	.79	1.27	1.52	.90	1.15	1.14

Deaths from Phthisis amounted to 9.16 per cent. of the total deaths from all causes, or, if all forms of Tuberculosis were included, 11.45. Deaths in the Public Institutions have not been included in the above figures.

CANCER.

The number of deaths has dropped from 11 in 1907 to 9.

Particulars of deaths from Phthisis and Cancer:—

PHTHISIS.

<i>Locality.</i>	<i>Sex.</i>	<i>Years.</i>	<i>Married.</i>	<i>Occupation.</i>
Morgan's Buildings	Female	1½	...	...
Heavitree Bridge ...	„	9	...	School.
Alpha Street ...	„	12	...	School.
Park Street ...	„	30	Yes	...
Roseland Crescent	„	47	Yes	...
North Street ...	„	52	Yes	..
Regent Square ...	„	61	No	Nil.
Manston Road ...	Male	20	?	Motor Engineer.
Whipton ...	„	37	?	Porter:
Monk's Road ...	„	40	?	Commercial
				Traveller.
Park Road ...	„	64	?	Commercial Clerk.
Coronation Road ...	„	44	No	Market Gardener.
Average age		34		

CANCER.

Pinhoe Road ...	Female	39	Yes	...
Polsloe Road ...	„	54	Yes	...
South Lawn Terrace	„	54	Yes	...
King's Road ...	„	64	Yes	...
Regent Square ..	„	84	Yes	...
Regent Square ...	Male	44	Yes	Railway Stores
				Keeper.
Whipton ...	„	49	?	Labourer.
Victor Street ...	„	57	Yes	Blacksmith.
Monkswell Road ...	„	66	?	Cider Merchant's
				Machinist.
Average age		54		

DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY ORGANS.

The number of deaths from these Diseases was 13 (Bronchitis 7, Pneumonia 6,) which is 2 less than in 1907. The decline has been noticeable each year since 1905 when the number was 34.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

All matters relating to the general sanitary condition of the District has received the same attention as in former years, and many improvements have been made. As in all Districts containing old property there are still many things needing

attention, but the work of reformation has been going on steadily and every defect reported has been attended to. Much has been done in the laying out of the new Pleasure Ground during the year, and when completed, under the able supervision of the Surveyor, it will be one of the best health-giving spaces that any Council has provided in this County.

The fact that a playground is also needed for the Polsloe Priory end of the District has not been lost sight of by the Authority, and efforts have been made to secure one, but the price asked for the land was prohibitive.

House Accommodation.

This is ample for the needs of the District. Building Bye-laws are in force and these secure sufficient open space about all new houses. The Surveyor has reported that 20 new houses have been certified for occupation during the year. This brings the estimated total to 3385. Taking the average number of persons per house at 4, there must be a large number of voids, else the estimate of the houses or of the population is very wide of the mark.

One case of overcrowding was reported and rectified. Four old houses have been satisfactorily renovated. The new School was opened early in the year. There are now 5 Public Schools in the District, each has been inspected and the sanitary conditions found good.

EXCREMENT DISPOSAL.

Most of the houses are supplied with water-closets, but a few isolated cottages in the Rural Ward have pail or earth closets. A Public Urinal has been erected during the year and the Authority are endeavouring to obtain sites for one or two more that are needed.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

One defective sewer has been re-laid and several old drains repaired, also some new ones laid. With regard to the treatment of the Sewage, at first it is run into tanks and a

solution of lime is added, which, by forming an insoluble carbonate of lime, aids the precipitation of the suspended organic matter, the precipitate or sludge is then pumped to a filter press converted into more or less solid cakes and sold as manure, while the clarified effluent is passed on to the land at the Sewage Farm and the process of intermittent downward filtration gone through.

HOUSE REFUSE REMOVAL.

Performed by contract. A weekly collection is made from all houses and twice weekly from courts and alleys all the year round, and one extra collection from all houses each week during the summer months. The present contractor has done the work satisfactorily.

WATER SUPPLY.

This is derived from two sources. (1) River Water taken from the Exe at Stoke Railway Bridge and supplied through the Exeter City mains. (2.) Well Water. This is a much harder water and nicer for drinking, but owing to the shallowness of the wells and their position, the quality is open to suspicion in many instances.

One Well was closed during the year.

An agreement has been made with the Exeter Corporation whereby an unlimited supply of Water for Street Watering and other Sanitary purposes can be procured at a fixed sum per annum from any hydrant and not, as before, from only one or two with a meter attached. This will save considerable time in carting and lead to much more efficient watering and cleansing.

Places over which the Council have supervision.

- (a) Common Lodging Houses. None in the District.
- (b) Bakehouses, referred to under the F. and W. Act.
- (c) Slaughter-Houses. There are nine on the register.

All have been inspected and kept in fairly good order. One house was closed during the year. There are 5 Meat Shops, these have also been inspected and kept in a cleanly state.

I have examined several carcasses during the year and all were, in my opinion, fit for human food, save two. In one there was abundant evidence of Tuberculosis, this was condemned and destroyed; the other was a doubtful case, the kidneys and other organs were much congested and it was thought safer to have this one destroyed also.

A Bye-Law is badly needed by which occupiers could be prevented from allowing outside butchers the use of their slaughter-house. At present if an Exeter butcher has cattle that he fears will not bear inspection he can bring them to Heavitree where, owing to the isolated position of some of the houses, he runs a good chance of the carcasses not being examined at all, for it is quite impossible for the Sanitary Inspector to see every carcass.

This, I have been informed, is done rather frequently, and, if so, it will give the District a bad name.

Neither of the condemned carcasses belonged to Heavitree butchers.

(d) DAIRIES, MILK SHOPS, AND COWSHEDS.

There are on the Register 25 Dairymen, Purveyors of Milk and Cowkeepers, 11 who are Purveyors of Milk only, and 4 Cowkeepers only, Total 40. As usual I have found the Dairies in excellent order and the Milkshops fairly well kept. Some of the Cowkeepers keep their premises very well, but others need rather frequent reminders as to cleansing and Lime Washing the sheds and removing manure. Twenty samples of milk have been taken for analysis and, with one exception, all were of good quality.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Action is taken by the Police. In addition to the samples of milk, samples of bread, lard, alcohol, &c., were analysed, and all found genuine.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT.

On the register there are 4 Factories, 2 Factory Laundries, 43 Workshops, and 15 Work Places.

One Factory was closed during the year.

SANITATION. (Sec. 2-8.)

- (a) *Cleanliness*.—Eleven defects were found and remedied.
- (b) *Air Space and Ventilation*.—Fair.
- (c) *Overcrowding*.—Nil.
- (d) *Drainage of Floors*.—2 defects found and remedied.
- (e) *Other Nuisances*.—3 and each was abated.

(f) *Sanitary Accommodation*.—In one case it was unsuitable or defective, and in another there was not separate accommodation for the sexes. Both defects have been remedied. Section 22 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act has been adopted. No Workshop has less than one closet per 20 workers.

(2) BAKEHOUSES.

There are no underground bakehouses; the retail houses number 4 and each is in conformity with the requirements.

(3) HOME WORK.

No list of outworkers has yet been received from employers in the District, but 3 lists have been sent by another Council. When calling at the addresses given I found that 2 workers had left the District, and 5 others had ceased working some months before the lists were received by the Council. No outworker was found to be working in unwholesome or infected premises. The total number of outworkers was 20.

MIDWIVES ACT.

There are four Midwives on the Register two of whom are fully qualified certificated women, and two are allowed to practice by reason of being in practice prior to 1901.

These have been inspected quarterly and their appliances &c. examined, the untrained Midwives and one of the others have not got all the outfit they should have, but are improving, and what I have seen is fairly well kept.

The homes have also been kept in a cleanly state, but in one instance I had to report on the insanitary condition of the back yard. This has since been remedied,

METHOD OF DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The only change from that of previous years is that I have substituted Izal for Jeyes' Fluid, as it appears to be a much stronger disinfectant and mixes more readily with urine, &c.

Rooms, Clothing, &c. are now disinfected with Sulphur Dioxide and Izal, and, if necessary, the Clothing is treated by Steam Disinfector. Disinfectants and Antitoxins are supplied free of charge to the poor, and sterilized swabs are provided for taking specimens for bacteriological examination. On receipt of Voluntary Notification of death from Tuberculosis among the poor, the rooms and clothing are disinfected, ceilings lime-washed and walls stripped and re-papered.

School Teachers are asked to send home any suspicious case of sore throat or rash, and to inform the Sanitary Authority. No child from an infected house is allowed to attend School for at least a week after the notified case has been removed to Hospital, and children discharged from Hospital are also excluded from 7 to 14 days.

The total number of rooms disinfected by the Authority during the year was 29.

FEVER HOSPITAL.

The number of cases treated in Hospital was 25 (against 12 in 1907.) Of these 9 were males and 16 females, and all were discharged cured. Two cases that occurred in the Topsham Barracks were removed to Hospital by the Military Authority. One case of Enteric Fever that occurred at a time when there was not sufficient accommodation at the Hospital was treated at home, and a nurse provided. As the cottage was too small for proper isolation the rest of the family had to go into another house. All expenses in this case were of necessity borne by the Authority. therefore the total number treated was 26, and the following Table gives the number of cases under treatment, and number discharged each month.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Admitted	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	6	1	9	3
Discharged Cured	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	5	3	2
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Remaining on the last } day of each month }	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	7	3	9	10

The ages of those admitted ranged from 2 to 47 years, average 9·6 and the average number of days in Hospital was 39·8 which is 5·3 less than in 1907, and due to one case of Scarlet Fever having been admitted in the peeling stage, and one case of Diphtheria detained only 18 days.

The provision of extra accommodation is now being considered by the Council. At present there are 3 small wards with less than 4000 cubic feet of air space in each and, therefore, each room is not large enough for two patients; also there is only one room for Nurses, so that when two diseases are being treated concurrently the nurses for one must sleep in the room with the patient. I have reported that two additional wards (with at least, four beds in each,) a Nurse's room and the usual out-offices are needed; if these be erected the Authority will be able to successfully cope with any ordinary outbreak, save one of Small Pox.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

J. F. WOLFE, M.B.

